

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Parties. This Settlement Agreement is entered into by and between Precila Balabbo (“Balabbo”) and Home Fashions Distributor, LLC and its successor in interest, Great Bay Home Ventures, LLC (collectively, “Home Fashions”). Together, Balabbo and Home Fashions are collectively referred to as the “Parties.” Balabbo is an individual who resides in the State of California, and seeks to promote awareness of exposures to toxic chemicals and to improve human health by reducing or eliminating hazardous substances contained in consumer products. Balabbo alleges that Home Fashions is a person in the course of doing business for purposes of the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, et seq. (“Proposition 65”).

1.2 General Allegations. Balabbo alleges that Home Fashions has exposed individuals to the chemical di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) from its sales of Bamboo Waterproof Mattress Protector cases Bamboo Waterproof Mattress Protector cases without first providing users and consumers of the product with a clear and reasonable health hazard exposure warning as required pursuant to Proposition 65. DEHP is listed pursuant to Proposition 65 as a chemical known to the State of California to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity.

1.3 Product Description. The products covered by this Settlement Agreement are Bamboo Waterproof Mattress Protectors (including the packaging cases) (the “Covered Products”) that have been imported, distributed, offered for sale and/or sold in California by Home Fashions.

1.4 Notice of Violation. On May 24, 2022, Balabbo served Home Fashions and various public enforcement agencies with a document entitled “Notice of Violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, et seq.” (the “Notice”). The Notice provided Home Fashions and such others, including public enforcers, with notice that alleged that Home Fashions was in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 25249.6, for failing to warn California consumers and customers that use of the Covered Products will expose them to DEHP. No public enforcer has diligently prosecuted the allegations set forth in the Notice.

1.5 No Admission. Home Fashions denies the material factual and legal allegations contained in the Notice and maintains that, to the best of its knowledge, all products that are or have been sold and distributed in California, including the Covered Products, have been and are in compliance with all laws. Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as an admission by Home Fashions of any fact, finding, issue of law, or violation of law; nor shall compliance with this Settlement Agreement constitute or be construed as an admission by Home Fashions of any fact, finding, conclusion, issue of law or violation of law, such being specifically denied by Home Fashions. However, this § 1.5 shall not diminish or otherwise affect the obligations, responsibilities and duties under this Settlement Agreement. Notwithstanding the allegations in the Notice, Home Fashions maintains that it has not knowingly manufactured, or caused to be manufactured, the Covered Products for sale in California in violation of Proposition 65.

1.6 Effective Date. For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, the term “Effective Date” shall mean the date this Agreement is last executed by the Parties.


2. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF: WARNINGS

2.1 Reformulation of Covered Products. As of 120 days after the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, Covered Products that Home Fashions directly manufactures, imports, distributes, sells, or offers for sale in California shall either: (a) be Reformulated Products pursuant to § 2.2, below; or (b) be labeled with a clear and reasonable exposure warning pursuant to §§ 2.3 and 2.4, below. For purposes of this Settlement Agreement, a “Reformulated Product” is a Product that is in compliance with the standard set forth in § 2.2, below. The warning requirement set forth in §§ 2.3 and 2.4 shall not apply to any Reformulated Product.


2.2 Reformulation Standard. “Reformulated Products” shall mean Covered Products that contain concentrations less than or equal to 0.1% (1,000 parts per million (ppm)) of DEHP when analyzed pursuant to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency testing methodologies 3580A and 8270C or other methodology utilized by federal or state government agencies for the purpose of determining the phthalate content in a solid substance.

2.3 Clear and Reasonable Warning. As of the Effective Date, and continuing thereafter, a clear and reasonable exposure warning as set forth in this §§ 2.3 and 2.4 must be provided for all Covered Products that Home Fashions manufacturers, imports, distributes, sells, or offers for sale in California that is not a Reformulated Product. There shall be no obligation for Home Fashions to provide an exposure warning for Covered Products that were manufactured prior to the Effective Date. The warning shall consist of either the **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** described in §§ 2.3(a) or (b), respectively:

(a) **Warning.** The “Warning” shall consist of the statement:

 **WARNING:** This product can expose you to chemicals including di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), which are known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

(b) **Alternative Warning:** Home Fashions may, but is not required to, use the alternative short-form warning as set forth in this § 2.3(b) (“**Alternative Warning**”) as follows:

 **WARNING:** Cancer and Reproductive Harm - www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

2.4 A **Warning** or **Alternative Warning** provided pursuant to § 2.3 must print the word “**WARNING:**” in all capital letters and in bold font, followed by a colon. The warning symbol to the left of the word “**WARNING:**” must be a black exclamation point in a yellow equilateral triangle with a black outline, except that if the sign or label for the Covered Products does not use the color yellow, the symbol may be in black and white. The symbol must be in a size no smaller than the height of the word “**WARNING:**”. The warning shall be affixed to or printed on the Covered Products’ packaging or labeling, or on a placard, shelf tag, sign or electronic device or automatic process, providing that the warning is displayed with such conspicuousness, as compared with other words, statements, or designs as to render it likely to be read and understood by an ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase or use. The warning may be contained in the same section of the packaging, labeling, or instruction booklet that states other safety warnings, if any, concerning the use of the Product and shall be at least the same size as those other safety warnings.

If Home Fashions sells Covered Products via an internet website to customers located in California, the warning requirements of this section shall be satisfied if the foregoing warning appears

either: (a) on the same web page on which a Product is displayed and/or described; (b) on the same page as the price for the Product; or (c) on one or more web pages displayed to a purchaser prior to purchase during the checkout process. The standard warning issued by Amazon for products sold on the Amazon website is sufficient to comply with the online warning obligations of this section. Alternatively, a symbol consisting of a black exclamation point in a yellow or white equilateral triangle may appear adjacent to or immediately following the display, description, price, or checkout listing of the Product, if the warning statement appears elsewhere on the same web page in a manner that clearly associates it with the product(s) to which the warning applies. Home Fashions shall instruct any third party internet sellers to provide the warning as a condition of sale of the Covered Products.

2.5 Compliance with Warning Regulations. The Parties agree that Home Fashions shall be deemed to be in compliance with this Settlement Agreement by either adhering to §§ 2.3 and 2.4 of this Settlement Agreement or by complying with warning requirements adopted by the State of California’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (“OEHHA”) applicable to the product and the exposure at issue after the Effective Date.

3. PENALTIES PURSUANT TO HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25249.7(b)

In settlement of all the claims referred to in this Settlement Agreement, Home Fashions shall pay \$2,000.00 as a Civil Penalty in accordance with this Section. The Civil Penalty payment shall be allocated in accordance with California Health & Safety Code §§ 25249.12(c)(1) and (d), with 75% of the Penalty remitted to OEHHA and the remaining 25% of the Penalty remitted to Balabbo. The Civil Penalty payment(s) shall be delivered to the addresses identified in § 3.2, below. For all amounts due and owing that are not received within the payment times set forth below, Home Fashions shall pay a late civil penalty payment fee equal to \$100/day to be allocated in accordance with California Health & Safety Code § 25249.12(c)(1) and (d).

3.1 Civil Penalty. Within ten (10) days of the Effective Date, Home Fashions shall issue two (2) separate checks for the Civil Penalty payment to (a) “OEHHA” in the amount of \$1,500.00;

and to (b) “Brotsky & Smith in Trust for Balabbo” in the amount of \$500.00. The Civil Penalty payment(s) shall be delivered to the addresses identified in § 3.2, below.

3.2 Payment Procedures.

(a) Issuance of Payments. Payments shall be delivered as follows:

(i) All payments owed to Balabbo, pursuant to § 3.1 shall be delivered to the following payment address:

Evan J. Smith, Esquire
Brotsky & Smith
Two Bala Plaza, Suite 805
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

(ii) All payments owed to OEHHA (EIN: 68-0284486), pursuant to § 3.1 shall be delivered directly to OEHHA (Memo Line “Prop 65 Penalties”) at the following addresses:

For United States Postal Service Delivery:

Mike Gyurics
Fiscal Operations Branch Chief
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
P.O. Box 4010
Sacramento, CA 95812-4010

For Non-United States Postal Service Delivery:

Mike Gyurics
Fiscal Operations Branch Chief
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

(b) Copy of Payments to OEHHA. Home Fashions agrees to provide Balabbo’s counsel with a copy of the checks payable to OEHHA, simultaneous with its penalty payments to Balabbo, to be delivered to the address provided in § 3.2(a)(i), as proof of payment to OEHHA.

(c) Tax Documentation. Home Fashions agrees to provide a completed IRS 1099 for its payments to, and Balabbo agrees to provide IRS W-9 forms for, each of the following payees under this Settlement Agreement:

(i) “BalabboPrecila Balabbo” whose address and tax identification number shall be provided within five (5) days after this Settlement Agreement is fully executed by the Parties;

(ii) “Brodsky & Smith” (EIN: 23-2971061) at the address provided in Section 3.2(a)(i); and

(iii) “Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment” 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

4. REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES AND COSTS

The Parties acknowledge that Balabbo and her counsel offered to reach preliminary agreement on the material terms of this dispute before reaching terms on the amount of fees and costs to be reimbursed to them. The Parties thereafter reached an accord on the compensation due to Balabbo and her counsel under general contract principles and the private attorney general doctrine and principles codified at California Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5, for all work performed through the mutual execution of this agreement. Under these legal principles, Home Fashions shall reimburse Balabbo’s counsel for fees and costs incurred as a result of investigating and bringing this matter to Home Fashions’ attention, and negotiating a settlement in the public interest. Within ten (10) days of the Effective Date, Home Fashions shall issue a check payable to “Brodsky & Smith” in the amount of \$18,000.00 for delivery to the address identified in § 3.2(a)(i), above.

5. RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS

5.1 Release of Home Fashions and Upstream and Downstream Customers and Entities. This Settlement Agreement is a full, final and binding resolution between Balabbo and Home Fashions of any violation of Proposition 65 that were or could have been asserted by Balabbo on her own behalf and on behalf of her past, present and future spouse, dependents, relatives, heirs, survivors, agents, representatives, attorneys, successors, and/or assigns (collectively, the “Releasers”), unconditionally and generally releases and forever remises, acquits, releases, satisfies and discharges and Home Fashions Distributor, LLC and its successor in interest, Great Bay Home Ventures, LLC, and each of their respective direct and indirect corporate parents, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, and

marketplaces, as well as the past, present and future owners, shareholders, directors, officers, employees, agents, attorneys, insurers, representatives, franchisees, cooperative members, licensees, successors and assigns of all such persons or entities, and also each entity to whom Home Fashions directly or indirectly buys, distributes, markets or sells the Covered Products, including but not limited to, upstream manufacturers, downstream distributors, wholesalers, customers, retailers, and marketplaces, (collectively, the “Releasees”), from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, causes of action, suits, and claims that Releasers have, had or may have against Releasees from the beginning of the world to the date of this Agreement, whether known or unknown, including all claims for failure to provide warnings for alleged exposures to DEHP from use of the Covered Products, from all claims for violations of Proposition 65 through the Effective Date based on exposure to DEHP from use of the Covered Products, or otherwise arising out of or relating to the Notice.

In further consideration of the promises and agreements herein contained, and for the payments to be made pursuant to §§ 3 and 4 above, Balabbo, on behalf of herself, her past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and/or assignees, hereby covenants not to sue and waives any right to institute, participate in, directly or indirectly, any form of legal action and releases all claims that she may have, including without limitation, all actions and causes of action in law and in equity, all obligations, expenses (including without limitation all attorneys’ fees, expert fees, and investigation fees, and costs), damages, losses, liabilities and demands against any of the Releasees of any nature, character, or kind, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, limited to and arising out of the alleged or actual exposure to the chemical DEHP from use of the Covered Products and the Notice.

5.2 Home Fashions’ Release of Balabbo. Home Fashions, on behalf of itself, its past and current agents, representatives, attorneys, successors and/or assignees, hereby waives any and all claims against Balabbo, her attorneys and other representatives, for any and all actions taken or statements made (or those that could have been taken or made) by Balabbo and/or her attorneys and other representatives, whether in the course of investigating claims or otherwise seeking to enforce Proposition 65 against it in this matter or with respect to the Covered Products.

5.3 California Civil Code § 1542. It is possible that other claims not known to the Parties arising out of the facts alleged in the Notice and relating to the Covered Products will develop or be discovered. Balabbo on behalf of herself only, on one hand, and Home Fashions, on the other hand, acknowledge that this Agreement is expressly intended to cover and include all such claims up through the Effective Date, including all rights of action therefor. The Parties acknowledge that the claims released in §§ 5.1 and 5.2, above, may include unknown claims, and nevertheless waive California Civil Code § 1542 as to any such unknown claims. California Civil Code § 1542 reads as follows:

A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS THAT THE CREDITOR OR RELEASING PARTY DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HIS OR HER FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE AND THAT, IF KNOWN BY HIM OR HER, WOULD HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS OR HER SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEBTOR OR RELEASED PARTY.

Balabbo and Home Fashions each acknowledge and understand the significance and consequences of this specific waiver of California Civil Code § 1542.

5.4 Deemed Compliance with Proposition 65. The Parties agree that compliance by Home Fashions with this Settlement Agreement constitutes compliance with Proposition 65 with respect to exposure to DEHP from use of the Covered Products.

5.5. Public Benefit. It is Home Fashions' understanding that the commitments it has agreed to herein, and actions to be taken by Home Fashions under this Settlement Agreement, would confer a significant benefit to the general public, as set forth in Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5 and Cal. Admin. Code tit. 11, § 3201. As such, it is the intent of Home Fashions that to the extent any other private party initiates an action alleging a violation of Proposition 65 with respect to Home Fashions failure to provide a warning concerning exposure to DEHP prior to use of the Covered Products it has manufactured, distributed, sold, or offered for sale in California, or will manufacture, distribute, sell, or offer for sale in California, such private party action would not confer a significant benefit on the general public as to those Covered Products addressed in this Settlement Agreement, provided that Home Fashions is in material compliance with this Settlement Agreement.

6. SEVERABILITY

If, subsequent to the execution of this Settlement Agreement, any of the provisions of this Settlement Agreement are deemed by a court to be unenforceable, the validity of the enforceable provisions remaining shall not be adversely affected but only to the extent the deletion of the provision deemed unenforceable does not materially affect, or otherwise result in the effect of the Settlement Agreement being contrary to the intent of the Parties in entering into this Settlement Agreement.

7. GOVERNING LAW

The terms of this Settlement Agreement shall be governed by the law of the State of California and apply within the State of California. In the event that Proposition 65 is repealed or is otherwise rendered inapplicable or limited by reason of law generally, or as to the Covered Products, Home Fashions shall provide written notice to Balabbo of any asserted change in the law, and shall have no further obligations pursuant to this Settlement Agreement with respect to, and to the extent that, a Product is so affected.

8. NOTICES

Unless specified herein, all correspondence and notices required to be provided pursuant to this Settlement Agreement shall be in writing and personally delivered or sent by: (i) first-class (registered or certified mail) return receipt requested; or (ii) overnight or two-day courier on any party by the other party to the following addresses:

For Home Fashions:

Whitney Jones Roy
Sheppard Mullin
333 South Hope Street, 43rd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071-1422

For Balabbo:

Evan J. Smith
Brodsky & Smith
Two Bala Plaza, Suite 805
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Either party, from time to time, may specify in writing to the other party a change of address to which all notices and other communications shall be sent.

9. COUNTERPARTS: SIGNATURES

This Settlement Agreement may be executed in counterparts and by facsimile or .pdf signature, each of which shall be deemed an original, and all of which, when taken together, shall constitute one and the same document.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 25249.7(f)

Balabbo agrees to comply with the reporting requirements referenced in Health & Safety Code § 25249.7(f).

11. MODIFICATION

This Settlement Agreement may be modified only by a written agreement of the Parties.

12. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This Settlement Agreement contains the sole and entire agreement of the Parties and any and all prior negotiations and understandings related hereto shall be deemed to have been merged within it. No representations or terms of agreement other than those contained herein exist or have been made by any Party with respect to the other Party or the subject matter hereof.

13. AUTHORIZATION

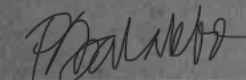
The undersigned are authorized to execute this Settlement Agreement and have read, understood and agree to all of the terms and conditions contained of this Settlement Agreement.


AGREED TO:


AGREED TO:

Date: 10/25/2022

Date: 10-25-22

By: 
Precila Balabbo

By: 
Home Fashions Distributor, LLC

By: 
Great Bay Home Ventures, LLC